

Pace City, Arkansas

Article submitted by Kenneth Poindexter, April 2013

Pace City is a common name used to denote the connection of County Road Ouachita 2 east of Stephens with Mount Holly Road. Pace City was never inhabited by a cluster of people living in close proximity to one another that would qualify it as a community in the traditional sense, nor did the Post Office Department ever officially establish its name with a postmark. The origin of the name relates to Harmon Pace, who lived there and operated a store next door to his house that was a common landmark for people who called the location Pace City and the road leading to it from Stephens, Pace City Road.

For years people living along the road were listed with a Pace City Road address in telephone directories. The name Pace City Road disappeared with the creation of Ouachita County's 9-1-1 emergency system which required public roads and houses numbered for easy identification in emergency response time. Even though the road is today officially Ouachita 2, it is still commonly referred to as Pace City Road by many local people.

"Pace City" was never the site of a common school, but two schools, Haltom for whites and Tate for blacks (in compliance with Jim Crow laws of segregation of that era) did exist in the late 1870s and 80s about a mile west. Haltom School was located about a half-mile east of Elliott Cemetery and was the nearest to "Pace City." Tate School was further west, in the approximate area where the rural water association's water tank serving the area today stands. When Stephens built its first school house in 1889, Haltom and Tate students eventually became part of that school system.

Elliott Cemetery is located about mid-way from the eastern city limits of Stephens to "Pace City". During the era when Haltom and Tate schools existed, and continuing into the early twentieth century, people referred to this area as "Forks of the Creek". It was given the name "Forks of the Creek" because of its proximity to the site where Gum Creek connects with Smackover Creek and relinquishes its name to that stream.